

REMARKS

Claims 1-21 are pending in the application, with claims 10, 13, and 19-20 withdrawn from consideration and with claims 18-20 cancelled without prejudice to represent its subject matter in this or another application. New claim 21 has been added. The applicants thank the Examiner for allowing claims 14-17 and for continuing to acknowledge the allowable subject matter of claims 7-9.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 102 and 103

Claims 1-4 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,555,960 to Bartsch. Claim 1 has been amended to better distinguish over Bartsch. Bartsch specifically discloses a "coil spring," and therefore does not disclose the linear bias member of claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 and all claims depending therefrom are thought to be in condition for allowance.

Claims 5, 6, and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bartsch in view of allegedly admitted prior art. As noted above, the amendment to claim 1 is thought to render the obviousness rejection moot. Moreover, applicants respectfully traverse the rejection. First, no motivation to combine the references has been offered, and no motivation exists in that such combination would not teach the claimed invention. More specifically, Bartsch teaches the use of an extendable handle to pull a piece of luggage. It does not teach, and no one would try or be successful at stabilizing themselves with an inherently unstable object such as a suitcase. The suitcase would itself tip over, and often does tip over even if the person is itself stable. Conversely, no one would mount a retractable handle to a vehicle or a wall

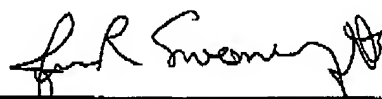
of a building and pull on that handle with the hopes of pulling that vehicle or that building to a different location. In short, not only is there no motivation or suggestion to combine these references, thereby failing to make out a *prima facie* obviousness case, but the combination would not teach the claimed invention in any event. For any of the above reasons, the rejection of claims 5, 6 and 12 should be withdrawn.

With respect to new claim 21, applicants note that Bartsch does not disclose a flexible member coupled to an anchorage apart from the retraction mechanism itself.

Claims 1-9, and 11-12 and 21 are thought to be in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request that claims 1-9 and 11-12 and 21 be allowed, as have been claims 14-17. Thereafter, applicants respectfully reserve the right to present as new claims rewritten in independent form the allowable subject matter of claims 7-9 as originally filed and found allowable by the Examiner.

The Examiner is cordially invited to contact the undersigned by telephone to discuss any unresolved matters.

Respectfully submitted,



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